



## NUTRITION & HYDRATION

### **Carbohydrates: Fuel for young athletes**

You can teach children the proper way to head a soccer ball, shoot a basketball or catch a football, but if they aren't eating the right foods before arriving for practices or games their performance is going to be compromised. All young athletes, regardless of the sports they are participating in, need carbohydrates to fuel their bodies as well as increase their chances of performing at optimal levels. Carbohydrates represent the main source of energy in a diet. The more carbohydrate fuel children lose during competition, the less energy they have to perform at their peak. Click [HERE](#) to learn how to make wise decisions when it comes to carbohydrates and how often they should be consumed during the day, among many other important points.

### **Protein: The building block of muscle**

Protein is an important piece of the nutrition puzzle for young athletes, as it helps repair muscles after exercise as well as promotes the growth of valuable muscle tissue. Good sources of protein include chicken, fish, pork, beef, eggs, peanut butter, soy milk, beans and lentils, among others. Every young athlete's daily diet must include adequate amounts of protein to enhance their ability to perform all season long. How much protein should children be consuming? Are protein supplements a good alternative? Which foods are better than others for providing the most protein punch? Click [HERE](#) to get those answers, as well as many others.

### **Making good decisions to enhance muscle recovery**

What coaches and parents say to children following games impacts that youngster's confidence and self-esteem. Similarly, what young athletes eat following games impacts their bodies and how they feel. Physical activity can cause damage to muscles and create unwanted soreness, but youngsters who replenish their bodies with the right types of food – and in a timely manner – are more likely to feel better faster and be able to return to the next practice or

game at full speed. What nutrients are most important for muscle recovery? How do carbohydrates and protein combine to promote muscle recovery? Why is the timing of nutrient intake after exercise so important? The answers to those, and other questions surrounding muscle recovery, are found by clicking [HERE](#).

### **Honing in on Hydration**

The importance of children consuming lots of fluids – and the right kinds – simply can't be stated enough. When children are exerting energy their body temperature rises. Youngsters who don't consume adequate amounts of appropriate fluids during games, especially those contested in hot and humid conditions, are at increased risk of becoming dehydrated and suffering muscle cramps, heat exhaustion or – even worse – heat stroke. How can you tell if you are hydrated? How much fluid should be consumed before, during and after exercise? What should you be looking for in a good sports drink? You'll find all these answers, and lots of other useful information on hydration, by clicking [HERE](#).